



Navitas UK Holdings Ltd

Embedded College Review for Educational Oversight by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

May 2012

Annex 2: Edinburgh International College

Introduction and background

Navitas signed a Recognition and Articulation Agreement with Edinburgh Napier University (the University) in 2011 to set up Edinburgh International College (EIC).

Programmes which are offered are as follows:

- First Year Degree in Business
- Second Year Degree in Business
- Pre-Master's in Business Management.

All are taught under the Standard Delivery Model under which EIC is responsible for all teaching.

At the time of the review, the College Director and Principal had not taken up this post. EIC has adopted the standard Navitas governance structure for the management of standards, quality of learning opportunities and publicity, although many of the main committees had not yet met at the time of the review.

Key findings

Academic standards

As a result of its investigations, the review team considers that there can be **confidence** that academic standards at Edinburgh International College are managed appropriately and in accordance with the policies and procedures of the provider and the partner higher education institution (HEI).

Quality of learning opportunities

As a result of its investigations, the review team considers that there can be **confidence** that the quality of learning opportunities at Edinburgh International College is assured and enhanced appropriately and in accordance with the policies and procedures of the provider and the partner HEI.

Public information

As a result of its investigations, the review team considers that **reliance can** be placed on

the accuracy and completeness of the information that Edinburgh International College is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

Good practice

The review noted the **features of good practice** detailed in the main report are evident at this College.

Recommendations

The review team makes the following recommendations in relation to this College:

The team considers that it is **advisable** for EIC to:

- always adhere to a more robust and formal method of approval for new pathways in future (paragraph 4)
- secure a periodic review process (paragraph 6).

Detailed findings

How effectively do Navitas and EIC fulfil responsibilities for the management of academic standards at this college?

1 EIC started operating with its first intake of students in October 2011 and so there is a very limited history of data and evidence on which to draw in the construction of this report.

Selection and approval of partnership arrangements

2 There is a formal agreement, called a Recognition and Articulation Agreement (RAA), between EIC and the University. Navitas provide a standard template for the RAA that can then be tailored to local requirements. EIC does not engage in any international collaborative activity.

3 In the development of new provision, consideration is given to the resource requirements so appropriate learning opportunities can be secured for the delivery of the curriculum. EIC follows the standard Navitas method for the development of curriculum.

Approval

4 At the time that the review team visited EIC, the relevant faculty, in this case the Business Faculty, of the partner university had signed off the programme as being appropriate. The team learnt that a scrutiny panel had not been convened in accordance with Navitas' own policy at the outset, but had followed the procedures of the university. There had been no formal approval event and no externality involved. Following the visit to EIC, the team was advised that a Scrutiny Panel event had subsequently met when additional programme choices were added to the programme provision. The team recommends as advisable that a more robust and formal method of approval for new pathways is always adhered to in future.

Monitoring

5 The College engages in both semester and annual monitoring as per the standard Navitas model in which semester reports of module performance feed into a final annual report. Due to the recent start of EIC's operations, no annual report has yet been produced.

Periodic Review

6 The review team learnt that the partner university did not intend to include EIC provision within its own periodic review system. EIC would therefore be responsible for devising and managing its own periodic review. This contrasts with the self-evaluation document which states the RAA makes provision for periodic review to be by the partner university using its procedures for reviewing the management of collaborative provision. The team recommends as advisable that a periodic review process at EIC is secured.

How effective is the management of student assessment?

7 EIC staff are responsible for setting assessments tasks and for marking them. The Link Tutor from the partner university reviews proposed assessment tasks and provides commentary to EIC staff. The Link Tutor also acts as a conduit to relevant staff of the partner university who moderate the marking. Currently, due to the small student numbers, all scripts are checked. If student numbers increase, then moderation may be on a sampling basis.

8 The Senior Manager of Academic and Student Services at EIC checks that assessments are mapped onto the learning outcomes of the modules. The review team learnt that there had been an additional cross-checking of marking by staff from International College Robert Gordon University.

9 EIC operates the standard Navitas model of two-tier boards: module boards followed by a progression board. The University Link Tutor attends both boards.

10 Students who the review team met were clear about assessment requirements and progression regulations. Students also reported that feedback on work was prompt and useful and that they also received verbal feedback in one-to-one tutorials with staff.

11 The review team learnt that the intention of the partner university was that the transcript of a student's achievement upon completion of the pathway would not show the detail of the modules passed by the student during the EIC part of the pathway. The University transcript would include an exemption statement of the form '120 credits - - Exempt'. As Navitas does not make any awards, the team was unable to see how students received formal certification for their achievement of credit at EIC.

How effectively are UK external reference points used in the management of academic standards?

12 At the development stage, use is made of the Academic Infrastructure, including *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and subject benchmark statements.

How effectively are external examining, moderation, or verification used to assure academic standards?

13 External examiners are not used. This aligns with usual practice in the Scottish system, in which external examiners are involved only in the assessment of the final two years of a four year degree.

How effectively is statistical information used to monitor and assure academic standards?

14 Navitas's management information system (MAZE) produces module data on pass rates, drop-out rates, progression rates and attendance which is used at module boards to monitor student progress and assure standards.

15 EIC intends to engage in the Navitas requirement of tracer studies where the achievement and progress of EIC students who progress to the partner university are monitored and tracked.

How effectively are responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities fulfilled?

16 EIC produces a Quality Improvement Plan in the summer preceding the year to which it applies. This is a list of tasks to be carried out together with dates of completion and does not constitute an enhancement strategy.

17 Students at EIC complete end of semester module questionnaires which EIC uses to ascertain that the learning resources are apposite. Students the review team met felt that learning resources are good.

How effectively are external reference points used in the management and enhancement of learning opportunities?

18 The Academic Infrastructure, including the FHEQ and subject benchmark statements, is used as a reference point in the development of curriculum.

How effectively do Navitas and EIC assure themselves that the quality of teaching and learning is being maintained and enhanced?

19 EIC uses student feedback and student achievement as mechanisms for monitoring the quality of teaching and standards achieved. Students confirmed that academic guidance was prompt with one-to-one sessions available. There was strong evidence that support is effective with particular praise for the Navitas developed Interactive Learning Skills and Communications module.

20 EIC operates the standard Navitas teacher observation scheme which entails observation by management. It is the intention of EIC to introduce peer observation, which currently is not in place. Both types of observation use templates developed by Navitas.

How is student feedback used to assure and enhance the quality of learning opportunities?

21 Students complete a module questionnaire at the end of the delivery of each module. They are also surveyed about particular aspects of their experience. Results of student feedback are considered formally at module boards and appropriate actions taken. However, action on feedback can also take place before a module board has taken place. Students the review team met felt EIC is responsive to their needs.

22 Actions taken by EIC as a result of feedback from students are posted on the Student Portal. EIC is intending to introduce a Student Council in the near future.

How effectively do Navitas and EIC assure themselves that students are supported effectively?

23 Staff of EIC, both academic and support, have a close and supportive relationship with their students. Because numbers are low, each student is well known. Students receive an induction, and in addition have access to information through the Student Portal and Student Handbook. Personal support is available from the Student Support Team. Academic support of a one-to-one nature is available and routine. Students the review team met reported that support was effective.

24 Student attendance is monitored closely and any slight drop in attendance triggers an enquiry to ascertain what help can be provided. The Student in Jeopardy scheme is also employed at EIC.

How effectively does EIC manage the recruitment and admission of students?

25 Students are recruited as associate students of the partner university. Most students are recruited through agents and marketing staff. The review team learnt that advance information on the admission process and requirements for admission are sent to prospective students who are clear about what this entailed.

What are the arrangements for staff development to maintain and/or enhance the quality of learning opportunities?

26 Staff at the College are able to engage in the staff development opportunities of the partner university. Navitas also provide training on cultural awareness to all staff at the start of their contract.

How effectively do Navitas and EIC ensure that learning resources are accessible to students and sufficient to enable them to achieve the learning outcomes?

27 Students receive an induction to the resources available, and they also have access to the resources of the partner university. They have access to, and instruction on use of, the virtual learning environment of both EIC and the partner university.

28 EIC monitors student feedback and achievement to help them judge whether sufficient learning resources are in place. When developing learning materials for a module, EIC staff can draw upon the material of the partner university although they cannot directly access material on the University's virtual learning environment relating to the delivery of the same module by the University. College staff also write their own material. There is some flexibility in the sequence of delivery of material if this is advantageous to students, but such flexibility is negotiated between academic staff and is not systematic. The review team viewed that the College was effective in providing appropriate learning resources to students.

How effectively does Navitas' public information communicate to students and other stakeholders about the higher education it provides at this college?

29 EIC provides clear, accurate and comprehensive information about its programmes.

How effective are Navitas' arrangements for assuring the accuracy and completeness of information it has responsibility for publishing at this college?

30 EIC follow the usual Navitas method for checking information accuracy which entails sign off by both EIC and the partner university. The review team considered this to be effective.

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